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ADDRESS

BY

HENRY CLEWS, Ph.D., LL.D.

Of the Mayor's Committee.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH, AT THE CHAPEL OF HUNTER (NORMAL) COLLEGE, PARK AVENUE BETWEEN 68TH AND 69TH STS., MANHATTAN, ON MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 20TH, 1914, AT 8 O'CLOCK.

Shakespeare said, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones."

With all his great knowledge, experience and judgment, he was right in the main, but in his own case he was wrong, as the good he did is remembered; and the evil, if any, is buried and forgotten.

Fifty years ago I had the honor to serve on a committee to arrange a celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of this great man. To-day, ex-President Levi P. Morton, Henry Holt and myself are the only survivors of that memorable committee, and it gives me infinite pleasure to represent these survivors at this gathering.

It is an astonishing fact that, next to the Bible, quotations from Shakespeare's works are more often used than those of any other author, living or dead. His works have been translated into the language of every civilized nation, and many passages that are apropos at the present time show how deep a student he was of human nature, and how little human nature has changed in three and one-half centuries. Kings, rulers and great warriors have lived and died since Shakespeare's time. Just think how few there are among them whose words can be remembered to-day; and many of the ancient celebrities are only remembered because Shakespeare chose them as characters in his plays and thereby made them immortal.

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I regret that the present day audiences care more for light comedy and vaudeville than for the grand Shakespearean dramas. Just so often, however, periods of time come when the public demand Shakespeare and insist upon having him.

I am glad, indeed, that the public schools are to help us celebrate. If I had my way, some first class actor would be engaged to visit the public schools during the spring season, and read extracts from Shakespeare's plays. Such a plan would do far more to impress the pupils with the beauty of Shakespeare's style and language than if they read the lines themselves.

I would also teach every pupil that grand piece of advice which old Polonius gave to his son Laertes, when he left home for foreign shores, the greatest passage of which reads: "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

I do not think that a period of fifty years should elapse between times for a celebration of Shakespeare's birth. I propose that such a celebration be held every five years. Those of us who are past middle age will soon pass away, and before we go we want to do our part to impress upon the coming generation that veneration for the remarkable qualities of Shakespeare that we ourselves are imbued with. Actors, like other human beings, are governed largely by their environment. Those who are remembered as greatest in their line have almost all taken Shakespearean characters as their specialties; Macready, Forrest, two generations of Booths, Salvini, Barrett, McCullough, Davenport, Irving, Mrs. Siddons, Adelaide Neilson, Charlotte Cushman, Bella Pateman, Ada Rehan, Helena Modjeska, Ellen Terry all took part in various dramas and comedies, but Shakespeare *made them*, while they helped to keep alive his memory and perpetuate it in such an able way that Hamlet, King Lear, Julius Cæsar, Othello, Macbeth, Brutus, Cassius, Richard III, MacDuff, Romeo, Petruchio, Ophelia, Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Rosalind and Katharina seem almost like our own people.

By the way, speaking of Macready, I was one of those present at the famous Forrest-Macready riot in Astor Place. I was pleased at first to be there, but when the guns began to go off all around me, I gave an exhibition of speed that any sprinter might be proud of, for, as our great author put in the mouth of his fat knight, Falstaff, "Discretion is the better

part of valor." Valor is the proper thing where the cause is a noble and just one, but discretion is always admirable in most circumstances in the lives of men and nations. (Just at this moment I wish Huerta had more of it—).

A great many, who ought to know better, say, "I do not care for tragedy, therefore I never go to a Shakespearean play." If these people would hear, or study, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," or "A Midsummer Night's Dream," or "The Taming of the Shrew," or "Much Ado about Nothing," they would find that Shakespeare's comedies were in their way as great as his tragedies.

Many people unconsciously quote extracts from Shakespeare and have no idea that he wrote them. For instance, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

"The ripest fruit falls first."

"While you live tell the truth and shame the devil."

"Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!"

"He hath eaten me out of house and home."

"The eagle suffers little birds to sing."

"Brevity is the soul of wit."

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

These, and hundreds of other trite sayings, are part of the daily vocabulary of the public.

Some people's idea of heaven is that it is simply a state of spiritual happiness, and that those who live in that state are permitted to keep in mental touch with the world and see the result of the good they did while here, and the good that followed. If this be so, and Shakespeare is in such a heaven, think of the happiness that is his to know that to-day, nearly three centuries after his death, we still celebrate his birthday, and hail him as a master who has never been surpassed, and rarely, if ever, equalled. Great authors, great artists and great composers seldom get their just due while alive, and I sincerely hope that in the after-life they are permitted to know that their good work is a monument that secures for them a lasting fame.

Many of the ancient Greek philosophers' names are perpetuated and are familiar to all of our students, while the names of many of the kings and rulers of their time are now unknown or forgotten. Everybody knows something of Shakespeare, but how many can tell the names of the kings of England who ruled in the century of Shakespeare's birth? How many of us here assembled can tell the name of any playwright of even one hundred years ago, and tell of a single play that he wrote? Shakespeare is still Shakespeare, and we must imbue our sons and our daughters, and their sons and their daughters, with our respect for him, and inspire them to read and study him.

I have no criticism to make on the work or methods of the educational authorities of this city; on the contrary, I can heartily, and with knowledge, sound their praises; but in suggesting that a first class actor be engaged to render Shakespeare's lines in our public schools, my idea is, that if the best could be secured the greater would be the resultant profit, as young men and young women are hero-worshippers, and the best would appeal more strongly to them. As I look back I can see in my mind's eye, and almost hear again, the great men of my younger days who so eloquently rendered Shakespeare's grand lines; and my desire is that the pupils of to-day should so remember them in years to come. Every one of us knows, and can repeat the Lord's Prayer, but it was said that no one had ever said it as it should be said until Edwin Forrest's time.

A certain clergyman had refused to dine where Edwin Forrest was to be a guest. Some time later a banquet was given at which the guests were about one-half clergymen, and one-half laymen. Unknown to the certain clergyman alluded to, Forrest was a guest. After dining, and while enjoying their cigars and friendly talk, a suggestion was made that each of the clergymen should recite the Lord's Prayer, as he thought it should be recited. Almost all did so. Then the host asked Mr. Forrest to say it as he thought it should be said. He did so, and so eloquently and feelingly that tears stood in the eyes of every one in the room. The clergyman who thought himself too holy to dine with Forrest was on his feet in a moment, and grasping Forrest's hand, said, "Mr. Forrest, you are unknown to me, but I want to thank you for teaching me how to recite this simplest, but greatest, prayer. Who are you, and where did you learn to so recite it?"

Forrest replied, "You may have heard of me. My name is Edwin Forrest, and I am an actor. I have been reciting the Lord's Prayer daily, since, as a little child, I knelt and learned it at my mother's knee, and each day I have tried to improve so as to do it justice. That I have convinced you that I am worthy is indeed a pleasure to me."

That clergyman had learned a lesson. And what I want to have done is to have the noble words and thoughts of Shakespeare so rendered that those who listen will be impressed as Edwin Forrest impressed his host and fellow guests at that banquet.

It has been well expressed that a nation's greatest fame lies in men, and not in material wealth or possessions; so England and the entire English-speaking races may well treasure the fame of this greatest of England's sons. Shakespeare is included in that galaxy of great men—seven or ten at most—who are indeed the planet-shakers, the rulers and kings of intellectual empires, incomparably grander in their dominion and extent than the material monarchies and governments of earth. The latter will, in the course of ages, as history tells us, decay and perish, but the lords of intellect, the sages, poets and philosophers of all time will have imperishable fame, and their work will continue to be an inspiration and a blessing to remote generations of men.

In this high and noble company of choice and great spirits, who have helped and uplifted humanity, the world will always acknowledge the almost unrivalled supremacy of William Shakespeare.

ADDRESS

BY

HENRY CLEWS

DELIVERED AT THE CENTRAL PARK EXERCISES
HELD IN HONOR OF THE 350TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON,
APRIL 23, 1914, AT 2 O'CLOCK.

Your Honor, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Being an Englishman by birth, but an American by adoption, which perhaps suggested to the Committee appointed by his honor, the Mayor, the assignment to me of the great honor of placing in position the flag of Great Britain with that of the United States; it is entirely appropriate that the Union Jack be entwined with the Stars and Stripes, as emblematic of the perpetual peace and amity that distinguish the two great English-speaking nations.

At the meeting of the Mayor's Committee on last Monday night, on my motion, it was unanimously voted to hold a Shakespearean celebration every five years, so that the memory of this great man may be kept in perpetuity from one generation to another. For all our plans for the future, we will have the assistance and co-operation of the descendants of those who planned and perfected the original organization, which is also very appropriate.

We commemorate on this auspicious occasion the natal day of William Shakespeare, who, to quote his own words, as applied to Julius Caesar, was the "foremost man of all this world," at least in a literary sense.

I do not hesitate to say that he was the greatest man England produced, and that he is England's noblest heritage to humanity, and England's greatest son.

We meet here to-day, under the shadow of the noble work of art designed by a great American sculptor, J. Q. A. Ward, to pay tribute to Shakespeare's genius, to do honor to his transcendent fame. We cannot hope by our feeble words to enhance that fame, for Shakespeare's name is written upon the scroll of earth's immortals, is known and honored throughout the civilized world; and as the years roll on, that fame will grow immeasurably greater because education and enlightenment will sooner or later prevail, even in the most benighted regions of earth.

Shakespeare is one of the few great immortals of literature—one of the choice spirits whose works will live forever.

Fifty years ago, on April 23d, 1864, I had the distinction of being on the Shakespeare Celebration Committee to honor the name and fame of Shakespeare, upon the three hundredth anniversary of his birth, and this statue, then erected, has, I think, performed in itself a wonderfully uplifting and humanizing work in teaching thousands and tens of thousands of our citizens, many of whom were originally of diverse races and creeds, something about the great bard whom we are honoring to-day. Many a little boy and girl playing around the Mall, or walking or riding with his or her parents in this majestic Central Park of ours, have had their first knowledge perhaps of William Shakespeare from the fact that this noble monument to the poet's genius is here.

When this celebration was inaugurated, our esteemed Mayor was inspired to appoint as members of the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary committee those surviving members of the three hundredth anniversary committee and also the descendants of those members of the original committee, who have since passed away. This was a happy and an appropriate action. So our work of half a century ago is still going on, and doing good for our citizens.

We honor and reverence William Shakespeare for his serene wisdom, the unrivalled beauty and copiousness of his diction, his masterly delineations of character and supreme faith in all that is good and of fair report.

In the roster of those great departed spirits who have helped and uplifted humanity, the world will always keep the great name of William Shakespeare well at the top of the list.

ADDRESS

BY

HENRY CLEWS

DELIVERED AT THE BANQUET GIVEN
BY THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB, IN
HONOR OF THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE, ON THURSDAY,
EVENING, APRIL 23, 1914, AT
8 O'CLOCK.

Fifty years ago I had the honor to serve on a committee to arrange a celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare.

To-day, ex-President Levi P. Morton, Henry Holt and myself are the only survivors of that memorable committee, and it gives me infinite pleasure to represent the survivors at this gathering.

I am indeed glad to be with you this evening, to celebrate the natal day of the greatest poet of the English language, and one of the greatest of all time.

Three hundred and fifty years ago to-day there was born in Stratford-on-Avon, William Shakespeare, son of John Shakespeare, a glover, formerly a farmer, (for such was the humble origin of this great king of literature). But genius knows no distinction of caste or class. In the laborer's little cottage by the roadside, the lordly mansion of a noble, or the gorgeous palace of a monarch, in hamlet or town, at the centres of civilization or in remote wildernesses, the spark of genius may be lit and a new and wonderful intellectual force may have its rise. Such a man—a heaven-born genius—as Shakespeare, owes little as a rule to ordinary schooling. While his knowledge was uni-

versal, and his adaptations and borrowings from other playwrights was a life-long habit of his—except perhaps in his sublimest masterpieces, such as King Lear, Hamlet and Macbeth,—yet the electricity of his genius, the profound philosophy of life which he had evolved for himself, enabled him to change many of those dry-as-dust chronicles and humdrum plays of other writers into the renowned dramas that now constitute the works of Shakespeare.

Oh, wonderful, calm, unconscious child of genius, great Shakespeare! What hidden wealth of intellect, what precious stores of wisdom lay slumbering within you when, as tradition tells us, you were a poacher on others' preserves in some rural spot of your beloved England, or a stable boy in the heart of London, or an obscure actor at the Globe or Blackfriars' Theatre in that then small, and almost provincial, city?

It is perhaps true that these were the outward physical manifestations of the *man* Shakespeare, but the immortal soul, the spiritual entity resident within him, triumphed over all these mean and lowly appearances; and he emerged from his obscurity into the splendid, glorious sunlight of his great fame, just as grandly floats in the atmosphere the lordly eagle, scorning the valleys and the haunts and habitations of men to soar into the empyrean vault of heaven, his only true habitat.

It would be a good thing if, as I suggested on Monday evening last, at the Shakespeare meeting at the Normal College, a first class actor could be selected to speak from time to time Shakespeare's lines to the pupils of our schools; and I see that my suggestion has led the "New York World", in an editorial in Wednesday's issue, to question whether there are any actors to be found nowadays capable of rendering properly the incomparable Shakespearean dramas. But if the writer of that article had been present at the rendition on Monday evening last,—without the help of costumes, gestures or scenery,—of "The Winter's Tale", by Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry's Educational Players, I think he would have had to confess that there *are persons* to-day, many of them residents of our own city, competent to do justice to Shakespeare, and speak his lines with elocutionary perfection.

How true and good, how appealing to all of us, are his good women! What noble self-sacrifice, fidelity, tenderness,

faith and love, do his heroines display in the noble characters of Rosalind, Hermione, Cordelia, Portia, Imogene and the rest.

As a nation's material wealth is dependent upon crops that grow from seed, so is its lasting influence due to the dominion of mind over matter. The man who plans and devises is remembered, while the man who builds only with hands is forgotten. Ask a dozen men for a list of those who have reflected the greatest credit on Great Britain during the history of that country, and I will guarantee that every one of them will include Shakespeare in his list. Ask them for a list of those who have enriched literature since the birth of civilization, and Shakespeare's name is likely to lead all the rest.

In the high and noble company of choice and great spirits, who have helped and uplifted humanity, the world will always acknowledge the almost unrivalled supremacy of William Shakespeare.

ADDRESS

BY

HENRY CLEWS

*At the Testimonial Banquet in honor of
Sir Johnston and Lady Forbes-Robertson
At the Hotel Astor*

Monday, May 4, 1914, at 7.30 P.M.

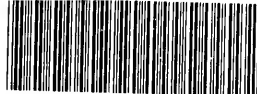
Under the Auspices of The Civic Forum.

New York City is notable for its munificent support of Art in all its branches. It demands and gets the best that is. It pays dazzling prices for the best singers in the world, and welcomes, with grand support, the best actors who speak our language. This is why we have with us to-night Sir

Johnston Forbes-Robertson, and I can call upon him to testify that we love him as one of our own.

We have just celebrated the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare, whose works have outlived the product of the literary geniuses who were his contemporaries. It is well to refer to Shakespeare at this gathering, as the honored guest of this occasion is the greatest living Hamlet, and has done more than his part on the stage to help keep before the public the grand ideas of Shakespeare. Every actor thinks that he can play Hamlet, but Sir Johnston *is* Hamlet when he appears in that character. The stage is the greatest pulpit in the world if properly used. Sir Johnston, in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," preached one of the greatest sermons ever heard. He silently entered a house filled with the demons of hell. The occupants were liars, slanderers, cheats, gossips and petty thieves. He enters quietly, filled with the spirit of Christ, and in his gentle, winning way imbues them with the seeds of the spirit which makes all who meet him live a new life and turn from evil to good. If that one play were the only one in which Sir Johnston took part, the American people would still be in his debt. Such men as he uplift the profession, as they seek the good and eschew the evil. No woman need fear what she may see or hear when she goes to see Sir Johnston act, as his work is uplifting, refreshing and inspiring. We of the English-speaking nations are knit pretty closely together in a bond of friendship, and such men as Sir Johnston have done yeoman service in cementing this friendship.

The worthiest traditions of the English stage are personified in our guest: the great achievements of Garrick, Macready, Irving and the other great luminaries of the histrionic world have been rivalled by him. All honor to all the great Englishmen who have visited our shores, and by their messages of good-will have cemented the ties of love and friendship which have bound us to the Mother Country during the past one hundred years of peace and friendship. It is well that we should always accord a rousing welcome to these unofficial, but nevertheless potent, ambassadors from Britain's shores. Amongst the number of these plenipotentiaries of peace and friendship our good friend, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, will always be remembered with feelings of sincere good fellowship and unstinted admiration for his



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great talents, lofty purpose, and the high nobility of his nature.

It is not meet for man to live alone, as a good wife is the greatest blessing that can be given to any man. Sir Johnston realized this fact and was most fortunate in winning the lady who bears his name, and who has done so much to help him in public as well as private life. To her is due the same measure of love and admiration that we express for him. The only thing we have against her is that she is such a good, noble wife and woman that he had rather live at home with her and enjoy domestic bliss than to follow his profession and reap a fresh harvest of success. To have seen and known the lady is our excuse for forgiving him for depriving us of the pleasure and profit he has afforded us. He may leave the stage, he may stay in his own beloved country; but thousands of hands invisible will stretch across the sea to clasp his hand in spirit, or to be raised in benediction over the heads of him and his dear ones. His presence may be denied us, but memory will still enable us to behold him close by and to think of him as one of our own.

I trust that we may be pardoned the conceit in believing that at times he and his charming wife will say "The Americans are a rather good lot, and we wish we were with them again."

I believe that in the not distant future we and our fellow citizens will have the privilege of welcoming to our shores Sir Johnston and his charming wife, and meeting them as dear friends off the stage, should they decide to abandon their profession.

We in this country are hero-worshippers and bow to all champions. As I stated before, we like the best of everything, and that is why we love Sir Johnston and his talented wife.

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